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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2009

In Today's Papers

Nabucco - A Dream Come True for Turkey's EU Aspirations
Media continue to praise the signing of the Nabucco pipeline agreement yesterday as "a dream come true" and most media predict the pipeline will support Turkey's bid to join the EU, while others raise their doubts regarding the viability of the project. Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "Turkey Is A New Energy Actor," and the paper reports, "Turkey from now on is one of the important energy actors in the world," and, "The Nabucco project will clearly strengthen Turkey in relations with the EU." In "High Five Barroso," mainstream Vatan reports, "PM Erdogan and EU Commission President Barroso gave each other a high five to celebrate the signing of Nabucco," and Barroso said, "A new period has begun in Turkey-EU relations." Vatan also notes U.S. Senator Richard Lugar said "The significance of the Nabucco agreement we are celebrating today is far greater than the natural gas it will carry." Vatan says that Lugar indicated the agreement demonstrates "a unity of purpose on energy security between the European Union and Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan." Liberal Radikal calls the pipeline, "The Line That Connects Turkey to The EU." Conservative-nationalist Turkiye reports, "The project which will connect Turkey to the EU has formally begun." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "We are one step closer to the EU." In "Signature of The Century," mainstream Sabah reports Prime Minister Erdogan said yesterday, "It is obvious that Turkey should be an EU member, even only by looking at the energy dimension." Meanwhile, economic daily Referans notes, "Ambassador Morningstar said the project will help rapprochement between Turkey and Europe."

Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "Nabucco Is Not A Dream" and the paper notes PM Erdogan commented on the pipeline by saying, "This will become a story of success that will foil all negative arguments," against it. Speaking of, mainstream Aksam points out, "Representatives from Russia and from Turkmenistan did not show up to the signing," which the paper takes as "an indication that the only gas for the pipeline will come from Azerbaijan, and there is not enough gas in Azerbaijan to fill the pipeline." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet claims there is internal conflict regarding Iran's participation, "PM Erdogan expressed willingness to intergrade Iranian gas into the system," while "U.S. Energy Envoy

Richard Morningstar said Iranian participation is not necessary at this point." In addition, Cumhuriyet notes "The most important problem for the project is the lack of a sufficient gas supply to fill the pipeline." Mainstream Vatan reports Prime Minister Erdogan said Turkey wants Iran to join Nabucco, but "the US immediately rejected the offer," as "Richard Morningstar, U.S. President Barack Obama's envoy for Caspian energy matters, gave a green light to the involvement of Russia and Iraq, but voiced objections to the participation of Iran."

Editorial Commentary on Nabucco Pipeline Agreement

Fikret Ertan wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Nabucco is an extremely important project for both Turkey and the for the EU. Equally important is to make sure that Turkmenistan is involved in this initiative. There are legal issues related to territory in the Caspian Sea and Turkey has to deal with that through the EU and through negotiating with the concerned parties."

Erdal Saglam wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Even though Azerbaijan played a key role in realizing the Nabucco project, Azerbaijan was not properly represented during the signing ceremony yesterday. President Aliyev preferred to be in London instead of Ankara which once again demonstrates Ankara's mismanagement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan crisis."

Gungor Uras wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Turkey must make sure not to look like the country is completely tied to U.S. interests regarding the future of the Nabucco project. Russia is still an important player in the energy game and eventually the success of

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Nabucco will be related to Moscow's attitude toward former Soviet Union countries, including Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan."

Hakan Albayrak wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "In the Nabucco pipeline project, Turkey acts as a bridge between the East and West energy corridors. But there is more to this idea since Nabucco will eventually become an East to East bridge. At the end of the day, economic interests will bring in the current Gulf and Arab nations and also Iran as well."

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "This is not only about a natural gas pipeline route. Turkey has become a key player in a giant economic integration project which also brings stability and security."

Turkey Calls for Cyprus Referendum by End of 2009

Hurriyet, Sabah, Vatan, Turkiye, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others: Turkish Cypriot Leader Mehmet Ali Talat said Monday he wanted to conclude talks with the Greek Cypriot Leader and reach a settlement by the end of this year. "We have no solid agreement as to when to conclude the talks but the goal is to devise a comprehensive solution," Talat told a joint press conference with Turkish Cypriot President Abdullah Gul in Ankara. President Gul, in turn, said "Our sincere wish is that the leaders would reach a lasting settlement in their talks, and as part of this settlement, a referendum would be held by the end of this year. Our ultimate goal is to reach a lasting settlement on the island and to devise a separate area of cooperation in the European Union with Turkey, Greece and the entire island."

Semdinli Case Lawyers Officially Request File on Buyukanit

Mainstreams Sabah and Vatan report that following the Presidential approval of the law which allows military personnel to be tried in civilian courts, the first important application has come against 9 high-ranked commanders, including former TGS Chief Buyukanit. Lawyers representing the victims who died in the Semdinli case applied to the Van prosecutor's office -to be sent to the TGS Military Prosecutor - to consider charges against former Chief of the General Staff Yasar Buyukanit in connection with the incidents in Semdinli. Earlier requests were rejected by the military prosecutor. In November 2005, a book-shop owned by a former PKK member was bombed and one person died. The car allegedly involved in the bomb attack was stopped by a mob and the three people in the car were taken to the police after been beaten by the crowd. One of

the suspects, a non-commissioned officer named Ali Kaya, was defended by then-TGS Chief Buyukanit who said, "I know him, he is a good boy." Following this incident, the Van Public Prosecutor accused Buyukanit of interfering in the trial.

Gulen Community Supports 'Party for Change' in Northern Iraq (Cumhuriyet)

The leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the northern Iraqi Kurds claim Ankara, through the Fettullah Gulen community, is backing the 'Party for Change' which broke from President Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) prior to the elections for the northern Iraqi Kurdish Parliament to be held July 25. Chaired by Nosirvan Mustafa, the 'Party for Change' is estimated to win 15 seats in the 111 seat parliament. The PKK-affiliated 'Party for Democratic Solution Party in Kurdistan,' or PCDK, had earlier been banned from entering the elections in northern Iraq, over allegations that the PCDK was an 'armed organization,' says Cumhuriyet.

Obama Orders An Investigation into an Afghan General Who Escaped to Turkey

Media pay close attention to President Obama's call to investigate General Rashid Dostum, an Afghan general who fled to Turkey from Afghanistan after accusations surfaced linking him to war crimes. CNN Turk reports, "The U.S. president says he is examining an alleged massacre in Afghanistan amid allegations the Bush administration resisted efforts to investigate it," and the network also notes, "General Dostum, who was a U.S. ally, is accused of

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having overseen the killings of up to 2000 Taliban." In "An Order from Obama," for "A U.S. Investigation Into Dostum," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Obama has stated that the investigation (into Dostum) which began under the Bush administration into the mass execution of 2000 Taliban has been reopened." Mainstream Vatan reports, "The U.S. sent a warning to Turkey regarding sending the Uzbek General to Afghanistan," after President Karzai reinstated Dostum as his military chief of staff. In addition, the paper points out, "Dostum fled to Turkey after being charged with war crimes in Afghanistan," and "he has been living in Ankara for the past two years." Mainstream Sabah notes "Dostum was being investigated during the Bush administration for the killings, but Bush stopped the investigation when he said 'This is a very sensitive topic.'"

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The main opposition CHP has applied to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of a controversial bill allowing the trial of military officers by civilian courts.
- On July 16, the Palestinian head of state, Mahmoud Abbas, will visit Turkey to meet President Gul, PM Erdogan and FM Davutoglu.
- Russian PM Putin is expected to pay a state visit to Turkey on August 6.
- The controversial head of Turkey's radio-television watchdog RTUK, Zahid Akman is leaving his office because his term in office expires today.
- On Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul will travel to Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit meetings.
- The Turkish Parliament will elect a new speaker August 4. Parliament Speaker Koksal Toptan says the AKP administration and PM Erdogan would decide whether he will run for another term in office.

World

- The Turkish Parliament's Human Rights Committee decided Monday to send a letter to the EU countries regarding the developments in Xinjiang instead of sending an inspection delegation to Xinjiang.

- Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman lashed out at Mahmoud Abbas after the Palestinian leader suggested appointing Tzipi Livni as Israel's foreign minister.
- The British Foreign Office rejects claims that a partial arms embargo had been placed on Israel following Operation Cast Lead.
- A roadside bomb went off Sunday near a convoy carrying the U.S. Iraq Ambassador Christopher Hill in southern Iraq. The U.S. embassy announced Hill's convoy escaped the attack and no one was injured.
- A television commercial for an Israeli cell phone company showing soldiers playing soccer over the West Bank barrier sparks criticism both in Israel and Palestine.

"JEFFREY